

WRIGHT BROTHERS MASTER PILOT AWARD

**Fairbanks Flight Standards District
Office Honoree 2004**



STEALEY, Sydnor L. Syd was born on December 13, 1925 in Louisville, KY. His father was a Minister and his earliest memories are of the many moves his family made being involved in church work. His aviation interest began at an early age at the sight of a picture of the “Spirit of St. Louis” that hung in the Smithsonian Institute. The picture was part of an article in the, Louisville Courier Journal Sunday Edition, from then on Syd wanted to learn to fly. He began his flight instruction as a senior in high school, received more training as an Army Air Corp Cadet but due to the end of World War II and the scaling down of the armed forces, did not solo until 1945 in a civilian Aeronca C-3.

Syd attended the University of Florida at Gainesville and Wake Forrest College in North Carolina from 1944 to 1949 and finished Dental school at the University of Louisville in 1953. He spent parts of 1947 and '48 in Alaska, returning to Louisville to continue his education. While working for the State of Kentucky in 1953 and '54 he rebuilt a Waco YKS-

6 biplane. In 1955 he acquired a Waco RNF and was able to fly a WacoUPF-7, the “Spirit of Hopkins Crossroads” owned by the proprietor of Hopkins Crossroads Country Store. In 1957 he flew a Waco UIC from North Carolina to Alaska with stops in Bettles and Bethel.

Syd moved to Alaska in 1958 and flew a 1934 Monocoupe to many Alaskan villages and fish camps while employed in a vocational rehabilitation program. In 1992 Syd found this very airplane rebuilt and well cared for in St. Louis. After one year of residency he was able to take the Alaska State Boards Exam and set up a Dental Practice here in Fairbanks in 1959. That same year he bought a Stinson 108, which he kept on floats in the summer and on skis in the winter. In the winter of 1960, a road trip was made to the Lower 48, on the return Syd picked up a wing for a Monocoupe rebuild, strapped it on the top of his 1960 Chevy Suburban and brought it home. This was a clipped wing version of the original, spanning 24 feet. He has owned more than 50 aircraft and has rebuilt and restored several of them. In fact this picture, taken in 1994 shows a 1946 L-13, which he owned three times during the 1960's. Each time the airplane came back to him it was in pieces, the last time he traded the pieces instead of rebuilding it, for a Seabee. The L-13 has yet to return for a forth go-round. In 1968 he purchased a Lake Amphibian, brand new from the factory; he owned this airplane for 20 years.

Syd was active around Alaska, hunting, fishing, and enjoying the odd dinner cruise on the float of the Stinson 108. Self serve but mosquito free. In the 1980's he was involved in some fuel

hauling activity to Van Curler's Bar on the middle fork of the Chena river in these Call Air airplanes and participated in an air sampling study over the Beaufort sea between the McKinsey River and Point Barrow in this Piper Commanche 250. He has logged more than 3000 hours as a Private pilot and has operated safely throughout nearly 60 years of aviation. He has been fortunate to be able to experience the classic airplanes of the past and the aircraft, which have made accessible the backcountry of Alaska.

Syd married Mary Lou on Thanksgiving Day 1963 and they raised three daughters Katherine, Jessica, and Laura. Mary Lou passed away in December 1998. Today Syd enjoys his family, the many memories that a lifetime of flying has given him, and is still active in the aviation community here in Fairbanks.